

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1903
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON
COMUSFORAZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PONTA DELGADA 0075/01

3.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OGEN, PO
SUBJECT: BRIEFING BOOK FOR AMBASSADOR BLOOMFIELD

REF: STATE 018004

1. DEGREE OF COOPERATION BETWEEN REGIONAL AND CENTRAL
GOVERNMENT: THE PSD CONTROLLED AZOREAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT (RGA)
RATES CENTRAL GOVERNMENT WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH THE
REGION CHIEFLY IN TERMS OF LISBON'S READINESS TO TRANSFER TO
REGIONAL CONTROL MOST SERVICES NOW PROVIDED BY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT.

AND AT THE PACE DESIRED BY THE RGA. JUDGED AGAINST THIS
STANDARD, THE LEVEL OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
AND THE RGA HAS , IN THE RECENT WORDS OF RGA PRESIDENT MOTA
AMARAL, " NEVER BEEN LOWER." OBVIOUSLY, PART OF THE CAUSE
HAS BEEN THE ABSENCE OF A CONSTITUTED GOVERNMENT IN LISBON FOR
FOR ALMOST TWO MONTHS, DURING WHICH TIME THE RGA HAS FOUND
ITS SUGGESTIONS ON THE MOST MINOR MATTERS PIGEONHOLED.

HOWEVER, IN HIS NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS, MOTA AMARAL WENT AS FAR
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AS TO ACCUSE SEVERAL CENTRAL GOVERNMENT ENTITIES OF ORDERING
THEIR LOCAL DEPENDENCIES TO REFUSE ALL COLLABORATION WITH THEIR
REGIONAL COUNTERPARTS AND OTHERS OF SIMPLY FOOTDRAGGING.

2. EXCEPT FOR SOME FLEETING HOPES RAISED IN MID-1977 BY A
TEMPORARY PSD/PS PARLIAMENTARY UNDERSTANDING, THE RGA HAS
ALWAYS BEEN CONVINCED THAT THE SOCIALIST PARTY FUNDAMENTALLY

NEVER INTENDED TO PERMIT THE RGA TO SUPPLANT COMPLETELY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S SERVICES (EXCEPT FOR A FEW SPECIALIZED SERVICES SUCH AS DEFENSE AND POST OFFICE) AS ENVISIONED BY THE RGA'S READING OF THE PROVISIONAL STATUTE OF AUTONOMY. LOCAL SUSPICIONS OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT INTENTIONS WERE EXACERBATED FURTHER AND UNNECESSARILY BY THE SOON TO BE REPLACED MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC FOR THE AZORES, GEN. GALVAO DE FIGUEREIDO, WHO THROUGHOUT HIS DIFFICULT TENURE CHOSE TO POSTURE HIMSELF, TO THE DETRIMENT OF ALL ELSE, AS THE VIGILANT WATCHDOG AND ENFORCER OF PORTUGUESE SOVEREIGNTY IN THE ARCHI-PELAGO. IN SO DOING, HE EFFECTIVELY SHUT OFF A READY CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION WHICH MIGHT HAVE SERVED TO ENHANCE THE LEVEL OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND THE REGION.

3. IN BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS, RGA OFFICIALS VOICE DEEP SKEPTICISM THAT MUCH IMPROVEMENT IN COOPERATION WILL BE POSSIBLE UNDER THE NEW PS/CDS GOVERNMENT, WHICH IN ANY EVENT THEY EXPECT TO BE SHORT LIVED. WHILE READILY CONCEDING THAT THE LIBERAL PS/CDS POLITICAL AGREEMENT PROVISION CONCERNING REGIONAL AUTONOMY, IMPOSED AT CDS INSISTENCE, IS IN PRINCIPLE ALL THAT COULD BE WISHED FOR, THEY DOUBT THE PS WILL ALLOW THE ENUNCIATED GOALS TO BE ACHIEVED IN PRACTICE.

4. INTERNAL PSD CONFLICT: THE REGIONAL PSD HAS AVOIDED TAKING SIDES IN THE INTERNAL PARTY DISPUTE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL. DESPITE HIS PERSONAL TIES WITH FRANCISCO SA CARNEIRO, RGA
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PRESIDENT MOTA AMARAL WOULD LIKE THE REGIONAL PARTY TO SERVE A MEDIATING ROLE TO HELP PRESERVE NATIONAL PARTY UNITY.

5. AZOREAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS LAJES BASE NEGOTIATIONS: IN RECENT CONVERSATIONS, BOTH RGA PRESIDENT MOTA AMARAL AND RGA REPRESENTATIVE ON THE GOP BASE NEGOTIATING TEAM JOSE REIS LEITE HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR DESIRE FOR THE CONCLUSION OF A BASE AGREEMENT AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE CONSISTENT WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF CAREFUL DELIBERATION OF THE ISSUES AND RGA PARTICIPATION IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. THEY PLACE THE BLAME FOR THE LONG HIATUS IN THE

WAS OPPOSED TO ANY MEANINGFUL AUTONOMY FOR THE REGION, AND

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PONTA DELDAGA 0075

US/GOP DISCUSSIONS SQUARELY ON THE GOP. AS PROOF OF RGA
WILLINGNESS TO MOVE AHEAD NOW THEY POINT OUT THAT THE RGA IS
COUNTING ON FUNDS FROM A BASE ACCORD (AND FROM GOP
AGREEMENTS WITH FOREIGN NATIONS FOR THE USE OF THE REGION'S
200 MILE MARITIME ECONOMIC ZONE) TO COVER A
SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THE PERENNIAL RGA BUDGET DEFICIT
NOW SUBSIDIZED BY LISBON. RGA LEADERS BELIEVE THAT THE
ACHIEVEMENT OF A LARGE MEASURE OF BUDGETARY SELF-SUFFICIENCY
IS ESSENTIAL TO PERSUADE LISBON TO ACQUIESCE TO THE REGION'S
DEMANDS FOR GREATER FISCAL AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE AUTONOMY.

6. CHALLENGE TO CONCEPT OF A SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT IN
LAJES BASE LABOR RELATIONS: IN YOUR DISCUSSION OF BASE NEGOTIATIONS,
YOU MIGHT ALSO WISH TO NOTE THAT THE RGA BELIEVES
THAT THE ANNEX OF A NEW BASE AGREEMENT SHOULD PROVIDE FOR FORMAL
PARTICIPATION (THOUGH NOT NECESSARILY VETO POWER) BY
UNION REPRESENTATIVES OF BASE WORKERS IN CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS
AND LABOR DISPUTES. WHILE PLACING NO OBJECTION
TO THE PORTUGUESE AIR ZONE COMMAND'S HAVING THE FINAL SAY ON
THE PORTUGUESE SIDE IN SUCH SITUATIONS, THE RGA ENDORSES THE
CONCLUSION OF THE AD HOC REGIONAL ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON LABOR
CONDITIONS AT LAJES THAT IT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE FOR ALL RELATIONS
BETWEEN LABOR UNIONS AND THE AMERICAN COMMAND TO BE "PROCESSED"
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THROUGH THE PORTUGUESE AIR ZONE COMMAND.

7. STATUS OF AZOREAN LIBERATION FRONT: THE AZOREAN LIBERATION
FRONT (FLA) HAS EXPERIENCED ABRUPT CHANGES IN ITS FORTUNES
SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN MID-1975 AS AN ANTI-COMMUNIST REACTION
TO GONCAL VISTA EXCESSES IN CONTINENTAL PORTUGAL. FOLLOWING
A PERIOD OF INTENSE, WIDESPREAD SUPPORT, ESPECIALLY ON
POPULOUS SAO MIGUEL, WHICH ALMOST CULMINATED IN THE REGION'S

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE FROM PORTUGAL, THE FLA SUFFERED A RAPID DECLINE IN STRENGTH WHEN THE IMMEDIATE COMMUNIST THREAT TO PORTUGAL SUBSIDED AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AUTONOMOUS REGIONAL GOVERNMENT PROMISED TO SATISFY LOCAL ASPIRATIONS FOR SELF RULE.

8. MORE RECENTLY, LOCAL POPULAR FRUSTRATIONS WITH LISBON, AND, TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, WITH THE RGA AS WELL, OVER THE SLOW PACE OF THE CONSOLIDATION OF REGIONAL AUTONOMY, TOGETHER WITH THE CONTINENT'S MOUNTING ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES, HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO A MODERATE FLA RESURGENCE. UNDER THE POPULIST, DEMOGOGIC AND, IN THE MINDS OF SOME, CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP OF JOSE DE ALMEIDA, THE FLA HAS SOUGHT WITH SOME SUCCESS TO SHED ITS EARLIER, PARTIALLY DESERVED IMAGE AS AN ORGANIZATION REPRESENTING PRIMARILY ENTRENCHED ECONOMIC INTERESTS ON SAO MIGUEL. ALTHOUGH FINANCIAL SUPPORT PROBABLY IS STILL PROVIDED LARGELY FROM THESE QUARTERS, THE FLA HAS EVEN BEGUN TO TEST A NEW NAME, THE AZOREAN NATIONALIST MOVEMENT (MNA), TO DRAMATIZE ITS SUPPOSED BREAK WITH THE PAST AS WELL AS ITS BROADENED BASE OF SUPPORT. THROUGH ITS REFURBISHED AND WIDELY READ BIWEEKLY NEWSPAPER, O MILHAFRE, AND FREQUENT, WELL ATTENDED RALLIES LED BY JOSE DE ALMEIDA, THE FLA/MNA HAS MANAGED BOTH TO KEEP ITSELF IN THE PUBLIC EYE AND TO PROJECT AN IMAGE OF SOME STRENGTH.

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9. AS THINGS PRESENTLY STAND, HOWEVER, A RELATIVELY SMALL MINORITY OF AZOREANS SUPPORTS ACTIVELY THE FLA/MNA OR, FOR THAT MATTER, ITS GOAL OF IMMEDIATE INDEPENDENCE. NONETHELESS, RGA GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS READILY ACKNOWLEDGE THE MOVEMENT'S LATENT APPEAL AND ARE RELUCTANT TO CRITICIZE ITS ULTIMATE AIM (AS OPPOSED TO SEPARATIST ACTS OF VIOLENCE). MOREOVER, IT IS GENERALLY RECOGNIZED HERE THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LEFT WING GOVERNMENT IN LISBON, OR EVEN A RIGHT WING MILITARY DICTATORSHIP WHICH THREATENED REGIONAL AUTONOMY, WOULD REKINDLE IMMEDIATELY AZOREAN SEPARATIST SENTIMENTS SO EVIDENT IN 1975.

10. POST HAS NO RECENT READILY AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE AZOREAN ECONOMY MACK

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